44. Of Vowes. pag. 125.
45. Of Faſting. pag. 128.
46. Of Limbus. pag. 130.
47. Of Purgatorie. pag. 135.
48. Of making of Images. pag. 140.
49. Of worshiping Images. pag. 144.
50. Of making of the picture of God. pag. 153.
51. Of bleſsing With the ſigne of the Croſse. pag. 155.
52. Of ſeruice in an vnknowen tongue. pag. 156.
53. Of often repeating the ſame prayer. pag. 164.

Faults eſcaped.

Pag. 8. numb 5. line 11. & 12. after, *Chriſt our Lord.* ad, *his Apoſtles, or their ſucceſſors* pag. 32. in ſome copies, for Iſay 9. 7. read, Iſay 35. 9. pag. 37. line 17. and Church, read, and the Church. Ibid line 20. *for you heauen*, read, *for you in heauen.*

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48. Of making of Images. pag. 140.
49. Of worshiping Images. pag. 144.
50. Of making of the picture of God. pag. 153.
51. Of bleſsing With the ſigne of the Croſse. pag. 155.
52. Of ſeruice in an vnknowen tongue. pag. 156.
53. Of often repeating the ſame prayer. pag. 164.

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A LETTER FIRST WRITTEN

and sent by IOHN FORBES, Pastour of the Englisſh Church at *Middelburgh*, vnto certaine of the companie of Merchants Aduenturers at STOAD, at their earneſt desire, for reſoluing this Queſtion:

How a Chriſtian man may diſcerne the teſtimonie of Gods Spirit from the teſtimonie of his owne ſpirit, in witneſſing his Adoption.

And now againe renewed and enlarged by the Author, at the desire of diuers good Chriſtians, for the comfort of their troubled conſciences, and publiſhed by thoſe of his flocke, to whom he did dedicate it for the publike vſe of the Church.

Thy Rod and thy Staffe they comfort me, Pſal. 23. 4.

LONDON,
Printed for *Thomas Man* and *Ionas Man*.
1617.

BIBLIOTHECA · BODLEIANA ·
DOMINUS ILLUMINATIO MEA

To Mr. Edward Bennet, Mr. Iohn Turner, and Mr. Edward Kay, the Author wisheth increase of all spirituall blessing in Christ.

REceiue (beloued in the Lord) a certaine Letter, which aboue eight yeares ago, I first did write at the desire of Master Iohn Scharpuls, now with God, & others of the Companie then at Stoad; and now againe haue reuiewed and somewhat enlarged the same, vpon occasion of the trouble of cõscience wherein I did perceiue many good

Christians to be caſt for want of ſufficient light in the ſame queſtion which is here handled, deſiring to miniſter ſome comfort vnto them, if it ſhall pleaſe God to bleſſe this my endeuour, in that meaſure of light which he hath giuen me. Vſe it, and if ye finde any fruite in it, impart it to ſuch as haue need. The Spirit of comfort & true peace be with you to the end.
Iuly 20. 1616.

Yours in the Lord

IOHN FORBES.

A ſhort Diſcourſe, ſhewing how a Chriſtian may diſcerne the teſtimonie of Gods Spirit from the teſtimonie of his owne ſpirit, in witneſſing his Adoption.

The ſame Spirit beareth witneſſe alſo together with our ſpirit, that we are the ſonnes of God. Rom. 8. 16.

BELOVED in the Lord, you deſiredby your Letter at my departure from *Stoad*, that I would reſolue you in that ſaying of the Apoſtle to the Romaines, Chap. 8. *The Spirit of God beareth witneſſe*

with our spirits, that we are the sonnes of God: how a man may know when that Spirit doth beare witnes also with our spirit. The occasion mouing you to enquire this, being ministred by some speech vttered by me in preaching: saying, it was not enough for a man, that his owne spirit do beare witnesse alone.

First, I will shew you the occasion wherefore I did say so: and next, I will do my best to satisfie your question, as the Lord hath giuen me to vnderstand.

It

It is moſt certaine, that a mans own heart (being a thing, as ſaith *Ieremie*, *Chap.* 17. *deceitfull aboue all things*) will oft times deceiue man himſelfe, & yeeld him a falſe teſtimonie of himſelfe, as alſo of his actions and eſtate. Is it not ſaid of the Angell of the Church of *Laodicea*, that he ſaid of himſelfe: *I am rich and increaſed with goods, and haue need of nothing*? This doubtleſſe was his owne teſtimonie of himſelfe. But what doth the Spirit of God witneſſe of him? *Thou art wretched, & miſerable,* Reue. 3. 17.

ſerable, and poore, & blind, and naked. And moreouer doth affirme, that this Angell did not know he was ſo.

Doth not Chriſt alſo teach vs in the Goſpell, that there be ſome whoſe hearts deceiue them, making them truſt in themſelues that they are iuſt, and yet are not: & cleares it by the example of the *Phariſee*, giuing thankes vnto God, *That he was not as other men, extortioner, vniuſt, &c.* who notwithſtanding is accompted of God vniuſt. And to be ſhort, in this point the

Luke 18.

the Lord Ieſus ſheweth vs, that many men at his ſecond coming, ſhall be miſerably deceiued by the fooliſh teſtimonie of their owne hearts: ſome being confident becauſe of the outward fellowſhip and familiaritie they haue had with Chriſt, both in word and Sacraments, and therfore pleading thus: *We haue eaten & drunke in thy preſence, and thou haſt taught in our ſtreets*, ſhall neuertheleſſe receiue this anſwer: *I tell you, I know you not whence you are, depart from me.* Others alſo vpon the confidence Luc.13.22.

dence of gifts bestowed vpon them by Christ for the good of his Church, pleading with him and saying: *Lord, Lord, haue we not by thy Name prophecied, and by thy Name cast out diuels, and by thy Name done many great workes?* shall receiue the same answer.

Mat.7.22.

Hereby it is euident, that the testimonie of a mans owne heart being alone, may be deceitfull, euen when it is builded vpon profession and outward participation of the holy things of God: yea euen when it is builded vpon

vpon ſome rare ſpeciall gifts of the holy Ghoſt; which although they be neceſſary for the body or Church in generall, yet are not requiſite in euery member to ſaluatiõ, ſuch as is the gift of *Prophecying*, *&c.* and therefore may both be wanting without preiudice, and alſo had without enioying of ſaluation.

Thus haue we reaſon not to truſt our Adoption and certaintie of our ſaluation, to the naked teſtimonie of our hearts, leſt we be found like the fooliſh Virgins. It is true, the

the testimonie of our owne hearts is needfull hereunto, because saith
1 Ioh.3.20. the Apostle, *If our hearts condemne vs, God is greater then our hearts: and if our hearts condemne vs not, then haue we boldnesse towards God.* But it must not be alone, for so it shall neuer be sure, but hauing the Spirit witnessing with it, then it is sure.

Now yet before I speake of the discerning of the Spirits testimonie, I must forewarne you of this one thing, to wit, that there be many effects of the Spirit in the Saints oft-

ofttimes, which at the firſt the Saints know not to be from the Spirit, and that both in their firſt calling, and after they be called: and therefore we muſt not meaſure the working of the Spirit in vs, by our diſcerning, neither muſt we iudge our ſelues deſtitute of the ſpirit, albeit we do not diſcerne the effects wrought in vs, to be frō the Spirit: for the Saints will feele ſtrange effects wroght in their minds, which they neither know whence they come, nor whereunto they tend. This is verified

fied by Ieſus Chriſt himſelfe, ſpeaking of the very working of the Spirit in our ſpirituall birth, wherby we are made the children of God, comparing it to the winde: *The wind* (ſaith he) *bloweth where it liſteth, and thou heareſt the ſound thereof, but canſt not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth*: ſo is euery man (ſaith Chriſt) *that is borne of the Spirit.*

Ioh.3.8.

This ſhall not ſeeme ſtrange to vs if we marke what is ſaid of the Diſciples at *Epheſus*, who were baptized, as appeareth, by *Apollos*, and yet they confeſſe

Act.19.2.

feſſe to *Paul*, that they had not ſo much as heard whether there were an H. Ghoſt. It may be alſo very apparently thought, that *Peter* when he did witneſſe of Chriſt, that he was the Chriſt *the Son of the liuing God*, did not know that teſtimonie to haue bene from the Spirit of God; and therefore Chriſt (to teach him that that teſtimonie was not the teſtimonie of his own heart, but by the Spirit of God) did tell him, that fleſh and bloud had not reuealed that to him, but his Father ẏ is in heauen. This

Mat. 16. 16.

This I speake not to make men careleſſe in trying whether they haue the Spirit or no, but to comfort weake Chriſtians, who although they haue the liuely effects of the Spirit, yet haue not come ſo farre as to be able to diſcerne them to be from the Spirit; as ſometimes they will be taught to vnderſtand, & cãnot tell how at the firſt; and to repent, and cannot tell how; and to reioyce, and cannot tell how; and to loue God and his Saints, and cannot tell how; and to beleeue, and cannot

cannot tell how: which al notwithſtanding are the proper workes of the Spirit.

Neither ſpeake I this to ſhunne the anſwering of your queſtion touching the diſcerning of the Spirits teſtimonie, which I pray the Lord to teach vs all, ſeeing there can indeed no ſolide ioy poſſeſſe our minds, till wee feele the Spirit of Adoption ſealing vp the certaintie of our election in our hearts: for if we bee ſonnes (as ſaith the Apoſtle) *the Lord hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son in* Galat.4.6.

in our hearts, which cryeth
Rom.8.10. *Abba, Father*: and therefore *if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, the same is not his.*

Seeing then it is euen by the Spirit which hee hath giuen vs, that wee know our selues to be the sonnes of God, and that God as our Father abydeth in vs, as saith *Iohn*:
1 Ioh.3.24. It is a most necessary studie, and most commendable in a Christian, to trie if he hath the Spirit.

Now therfore to come to your question, I will speake of it in all sobriety according to that measure

ſure of faith which the Lord hath giuen me.

Firſt in generall, it ſhall not be amiſſe to know what is the teſtimonie of the Spirit.

Secondly, after what manner the Spirit doth giue teſtimonie.

And laſtly, we ſhall clearely ſee how to diſcerne it from the teſtimonie of our owne ſpirit.

In generall, the whole word of God is the teſtimonie of the Spirit. For whatſoeuer is therein cõtained, the Spirit doth witneſſe it, and nothing elſe doth the Spirit witneſſe

nesse, but that which is contained in the word: therefore is the word of God called his testimonie: *The testimonie of the Lord is sure.* And againe: *God established a testimony in Iacob.* And oft times in the 119. Psal. the Lords words are called *his testimonies*, because euery sentence of the word, is a testimonie of Gods will: Therefore is it that the Prophet commands vs to go to the Law and to the testimonie. For nothing can we know of Gods mind towards vs, except we hearken what the Spirit

Psal. 19.

Psal. 79.

Esa. 8.

rit ſpeakes in his word; & therefore Chriſt willeth vs to ſearch the Scriptures, becauſe they witnes of him. So, whatſoeuer the word doth perſwade our hearts touching God and his loue in Chriſt, that is the teſtimonie of the Spirit: and therefore when hearing the word of God, our hearts receiues any aſſurance or perſwaſion of redemption, remiſſion of ſinnes, &c. that ſame is and muſt be the Spirits teſtimonie. As for example, when by the word a man is made to know Chriſt to be the Lord, Ioh. 5. 39.

Lord, the Redeemer, &c. doubtlesse that is a testimonie of Gods Spirit, by the word witnessing to the heart that truth, & causing the heart to beleeue it. But here we must carefully take heede, that our hearts be not deceiued touching that which you most desire to know, that is, touching our Adoption, by mistaking the Spirits testimonie. For eschuing of this danger we haue to vnderstand; that the Spirit by the word perswades two māner of waies, to wit, generally and specially; generally

rally when that which is reuealed out of the word is generally beleeued as Gods truth: ſpecially when it is ſpecially beleeued. The generall is no warrant of adoption. For in that ſort the very diuels beleeue and tremble, ſaith *Iames*. A reprobate may beleeue generally all to be true which is in the word of God, and yet neuer haue any teſtimonie of the Spirit, of his particular adoption: he may beleeue that Chriſt is a Sauiour of ſinners, & yet not beleeue that he is a Sauiour vnto him: he may

Iam. 2. 19.

may beleeue that God in Christ will forgiue sinners: and yet no waies haue assurance of the remission of his owne sinnes: yea he may be a Preacher, and be witnesse of all the promises of God in Christ to others, and yet haue no part in them himselfe. Therefore leauing this general testimonie of the Spirit, I come to the speciall testimony, which we must discerne before our Adoption be sealed to vs. And in discerning this, there is also great wisedome required: for there-

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in alſo may a man be deceiued. For there is ſome ſort of ſpeciall teſtificatiõ that witneſſeth not adoption. For vnderſtanding hereof, we muſt conſider that the Spirits teſtimonie in ſpeciall manner is of two ſorts.

The firſt is, when he witneſſes and reueales grace particularly to a man, but imprints not the thing reuealed in the heart, neither ſeales it in the ſoule.

The ſecond is, when not onely he reueales & witneſſes the promiſes in ſpeciall manner to a man,

but also writeth them in his heart, and seales them in his soule. Now to make this more plaine, we must consider what are the words of Gods couenant in Christ with the elect: After these daies (saith the Lord) *I will put my lawes in their minde, and in their heart I will write them.* If we weigh these words aright, we shall see that which I haue spoken, cleare. God in giuing his Law spake to his people, and by his Spirit witnessed his will to them: but this word which was spoken,

Ier. 31. Heb. 8.

ken, was not written in their hearts, but in tables of ſtone: therefore the Iewes did not abide in that couenant. The peculiar promiſe of God to the elect in Chriſt is, that he ſhall write his words in their hearts. When thē the Lords Spirit witneſſeth, and in witneſſing writes the thing witneſſed in the heart, it is an aſſurance of Gods effectuall ſpeaking: but when he witneſſes to the heart, and yet writes not that teſtimonie in the heart, it is no teſtimonie of adoption. To make this plaine:

Heb. 8.9.

it is certaine, there can be no true faith in the heart, where the word of God abideth not. Christ shews this in the fift Chapter of *Iohn*, speaking to the Iewes, *His word* (saith he) *haue ye not abyding in you, because ye beleeue not in him whom he hath sent:* declaring that the abyding of the word in man, and beleeuing, do still accompanie one the other. And if we will consider his speech in the sixt chap. of Iohn, we shall see that the cause why his word did not abide in them, was, because they

Ioh.5.38.

Ioh.6.45.

were

were not taught of God, that is, they had not hard nor learned of the Father, according to his promiſe, I will put my lawes in their minde; and in their heart will I write them: therefore it is that *Moſes* ſpeaking of the eſtate of the choſen children of God vnder grace, ſaith, that this commandemẽt which I command thee this day (meaning thereby the word of the Father) *is not hid from thee, neither is it far from thee, it is not in the heauen, that thou ſhouldeſt ſay, who ſhal go vp for vs to heauen, and* Deut. 30. 12

bring it vs, and cause vs to heare it, that we may do it? neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go ouer the sea for vs, and bring it vs & cause vs to heare it, that we may do it? but the word is very neare vnto thee, euen in thy mouth, and in thy heart for to do it. The Apostle expounds the same to the Rom. and shewes that this is the word of the Father which they did preach. For this is the promise of God to his Church vnder the Gospell, by the mouth of his Prophet: *All thy children*

Rom. 10. 18.

Esay 54. 13

shall

ſhall be taught of the Lord: and this is the Lords teaching, euen the writing of his word in the heart by his Spirit. Of the firſt ſort of this ſpeciall receiuing the word, you may reade in Iohn: it is ſaid of the Iewes, *many beleeued in Chriſt*, and yet theſe ſame doth Chriſt declare to be the ſeruants of ſinne, and children of the diuell, & murtherers: and in the 37. verſe he ſhewes why they were ſuch, becauſe his word had no place in them: therefore doth he warne them in the 31. verſe that

Ioh. 8. 30.

if they did continue in his word, they were verily his Disciples; teaching thereby, that it is not the receiuing of his word simply, that maketh vs Disciples: but the abyding in it, which none can do that hath it not written in their heart by the Spirit. Of the second sort of the speciall receiuing the word, you may reade in the 17. Chapter of Iohn, in the words of Christ concerning his Disciples: *I haue giuen them the words which thou gauest me, and they haue receiued them, &c.* Of both

Ioh. 17.8.

both theſe ſorts of receiuing the Spirits teſtimonie, you may reade in the Goſpell of Saint *Math.* in the Parable of the Sower; the one is like the ground which receiueth ſeed, but yeeldeth no fruite againe: the other is like the ground which receiueth the ſeed, & bringeth forth fruite in abundance: becauſe God the Father is the husbandman thereof: as Chriſt ſaith in the 15. Chapter of Iohn. But you may aske, how I can call this ſort of witneſſing which is fruitleſſe, to be the Spi- Mat.13.18.

rits testimonie? Remember I pray you what the Apostle saith to the *Corinthians*, No man can
1 Cor.12.3 call Iesus Lord, but by the holy Ghost. Whereby it is plaine that there is no possibility in man of receiuing or acknowledging any part of that mysterie of godlinesse, without the Spirits working. And yet, albeit this be the worke of the Spirit, yet doth it not proue him in whom it is, to be the child of God. For
Mat.7.21. Christ saith plainly, *Not euery one that call me Lord, Lord, shall enter into*

into the kingdome of heauen.

And becauſe this ſame effect in the very reprobate is the worke of the Spirit, (for the naturall man cannot perceiue the things of the Spirit) therfore are the very reprobate thus illuminate after this manner, ſaid to haue bene made partakers of the holy Ghoſt: not that euer that Spirit of Adoption, which God ſends forth in the hearts of his ſonnes to ſeale them vnto the day of redemptiõ, was euer ſent into their hearts: But becauſe euen that

1 Cor. 2. 14

Heb. 6. 4.

that light & taste of heauenly things which they receiued, was by the working of the holy Ghost: although he neuer did giue them full possession of them by imprinting them in their hearts, and sealing them in their soules. For that which Christ saith to his Disciples (when he promiseth to send them th' Spirit of truth) remaineth still true, that the world cannot receiue him, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: and therefore we may iustly say, that they who receiue this

Iob.14.17.

this taſte of Chriſt and of the good word of God, do not diſcerne the Spirit to worke theſe things, becauſe they neither ſee him nor know him, neither can they receiue him, but are like vnto naturall men, who albeit they haue their being, and life, and mouing in God, yet ſtill remaine without God in this world. But it may then be demanded how it is that they are ſaid to be made partakers of the holy Ghoſt? and what difference is there betwixt them and the elect in participation

Act. 17.28.

Ephe. 2, 12.

ticipation of the Spirit? To vnderstand this, we must remēber, that there must be a certaine participation of the Spirit whersoeuer any effect of the Spirit is found in whatsoeuer measure or manner. But we are to marke a difference both of measure and manner. For as a man that hath an excellent peece of wine to sell, will giue to all that come, so much as is sufficient to make thē know the taste of it, yet he giueth not to euery one such a quantitie as is sufficient to bring nourish-

ment

ment and refreſhment to their bodies and ſpirits. And as a Phyſition that hath prepared a comfortable potiõ for the health of a beloued patient, he will giue to others a little of it to make them apprehend the taſte of it: but not ſo, as to haue any ſtrength to make any operatiõ in their ſtomacke: for that quantity he giues onely to the patient for whoſe health it is prepared.

Now they who taſted of this wine or potion, can diſcerne the goodnes of it, albeit they neuer did

did drinke it, nor euer be partakers of ỹ refreshing power of it.

So is it with the Lord in his dispensation: he vseth sometimes onely to giue a naked sight and knowledge of Christ, & his mercie in him, to mẽ: and this I called before a generall perswasion of the Spirit, when men are made to know Christ in generall, but without all sence or feeling of him.

Sometimes the Spirit comes nearer, & touches the heart with Christ, & with the powers of the world to come, euen so farre,

farre, as the heart receiueth a taſte of the loue of God, and of the mercies of God in Chriſt, in ſuch ſort, that they receiue the word incontinently with ioy: as ſaith Chriſt. The Spirit hauing in that meaſure teſtified the word to them, as is ſufficient to make thē taſte the ſweetneſſe of it: albeit he neuer fill their heart with it, nor imprint it in their minds, that they may find the power of it vnto life. The laſt degree of the Spirits witneſſing, is, whē not onely he touches the lips with grace to make the

Mat. 13. 20.

the taste of it felt: but when he poures in the loue of God, and all the graces reuealed in the word, and sheds them abroad in the heart: as saith the Apostle to the Romans, and so makes the heart to enioy, receiue & possesse the promise by imprinting it therein. So that the working & witnessing of the Spirit, in the wicked, is like the sinell of an Apothecaries shop: which one that passeth by, receiueth, although he neuer carry any of these odoriferous things with him. But the wit-

Rom. 5. 5.

witneſſing of the Spirit, to the elect, is by imparting the thing witneſſed to the ſoule, and making it really to poſſeſſe it. So that if a man could ſee the ſoule of a true child of God, he ſhould ſee ingrauen in it, mercie, peace, loue, righteouſnes, life, ioy, and Chriſt himſelfe. All the promiſes of God in Chriſt, being written therein, by the Spirit, according to the couenant of God. Conforme to this, doth the Apoſtle ſpeake of the Spirits witneſſing to the hearts of the Corinthi-

ans,

ans, when he saith, *Ye are manifest to be the Epistle of Christ, ministred by vs, and written, not with ink, but with the Spirit of the liuing God: not in Tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.*

Now therefore wee come to speake of this witnessing of the Spirit which is proper to the elect: And to the end we may clearely discerne the testimonie of the Spirit witnessing with our Spirits, that we are the sons of God: we must yet more deepely marke and consider this testimonie.

The

The worke of the Spirit in aſſuring vs of adoption, is twofold.

The firſt, for diſtinction, we ſhall call this firſt writing of the word reuealed, in our hearts, and ſo making vs to beleeue in God, as our God and Father in Chriſt. Eph. 1. 13.

The ſecond, is our ſealing, after we haue beleeued. That it is ſo, ye may ſee in the words of the Apoſtle to the Epheſians: *In whom alſo* (ſayes he) *ye haue truſted after that ye heard the word of truth, euen the Goſpell of your ſaluation; wherein alſo after ye* Eph. 1. 13.

ye beleeued, ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise.

Marke first this worke of the Spirit, in causing vs to beleeue in God, by the effectuall reuelation of the word: next, marke that other worke of the Spirit, after we haue beleeued, in sealing vs. The first of these two, although it be felt by vs, yet at the first, we cannot discerne it to be the work of the Spirit, till afterward. For, before we be made spirituall, we can discerne nothing of the Spirit: because the things of

of the Spirit are ſpiritually diſcerned. But when we receiue the Spirit which is of God, then are we able to know the things which are giuen to vs of God. Therfore that teſtimonie whereof the Apoſtle ſpeaketh to the Rom. which witneſſeth with our ſpirits, is to be vnderſtood of the ſecond worke of the Spirit, which is our ſealing. 1 Cor. 2.

That we may vnderſtand this aright, we muſt conſider that there is ſomething that cometh in vs betwixt the firſt worke of the Spirit and the

the second. And that is the testimonie of our owne spirit, bearing witnesse, that we are the sons of God. For when God by his Spirit hath imprinted in our hearts the word of promise, then begin our hearts to say, We are the children of God: being perswaded by the Spirit, secretly insinuating the word in our
Psal.116.10 hearts to beleeue, and beleeuing to speake: accor-
1 Cor.4.13 ding as it is said, *I beleeued and therefore did speake.*

Now it might seeme there needed no more.

But

But let vs remẽber what Chriſt ſaith to *Peter*, *Simon, Simon, behold Sathan hath deſired to ſift you as wheate, but I haue prayed for thee that thy faith faile not.* So we haue neede that our hearts be eſtabliſhed in that worke of the Spirit, otherwayes wee ſhould be in danger to make ſhipwracke of faith & of a good conſcience: which is nothing elſe but this teſtimony of our own hearts. Therfore doth the Church pray in the Pſal. *Eſtabliſh ô God that which thou haſt wrought in vs.* And the Apoſtle after he

Luk. 22. 31.

Pſal. 68. 28.

hath giuen thankes vnto God for the Theſſalonians effectuall calling, he prayes to God, *That he who had giuen them this good hope through grace, would alſo eſtabliſh them in euery word and good worke.* Therefore is it that our God, for ſtabliſhing vs in faith, & in the aſſurance of our Adoption, ſeales vs vp by the holy Spirit of promiſe. This is manifeſt out of the former place of the Epheſians, where he ſaith, *That after they beleeued, they were ſealed with the holy Spirit of promiſe.* This ſame

ſame doth the Apoſtle to the Galathians cõfirme, when he ſheweth that Chriſt was ſent to this end, to redeeme vs: *That we might receiue the Adoption of the ſonnes*: and then he addeth, *And becauſe ye are ſonnes, God hath ſent foorth the Spirit of his Sonne into your hearts, that crieth Abba, Father.* And that this ſealing of vs, by ſending forth the Spirit of Adoption in our hearts, is the meane whereby God eſtabliſheth vs, it is manifeſt by the Apoſtle to the Corinthians. For when Gal.4.6.

firſt he hath ſhewed, that it is God which eſtabliſheth, ſaying, *It is God which eſtabliſheth vs with you in Chriſt*: then addeth he the meane whereby God did ſtabliſh them, ſaying: *and hath anointed vs, who hath alſo ſealed vs, and hath giuen the earneſt of the Spirit in our hearts.* Which three ſayings are al one thing in ſubſtance. Therefore doth *Iohn*, from this anointing, confirme and aſſure theſe to whom he did write, againſt the fearing to fall away: but (ſaith he) *The anointing which ye receiued*

2 Cor. 1. 21

1 Ioh. 2. 27.

ued of him, dwelleth in you: and as it taught you, *ye ſhall abide in him.* And the Apoſtle to the Corinthians taketh the argument of his confidence from this, *That God hath giuen vs the earneſt of his Spirit.* And the ſame Apoſtle from this giuing of vs the Spirit of libertie which crieth Abba Father, proueth vs to be the ſonnes of God in that eight Chapter to the Romans. Whereby it is plaine, that by theſe three the ſelfe ſame thing is meant, albeit diuerſly expreſſed: according to the

2 Cor. 5. 5.

Rom. 8. 15. 16.

three sorts of confirmation, the one by annointing; so were Kings, Priests & Prophets confirmed in their calling: the other by an earnest, which is a confirmation of the bargaine, and of the payment of the full summe: and the last, by sealing, which in all writs, contracts, and obligations, is a confirmation of all therein contained and promised. According to which, amongst the *Persians*, whatsoeuer was sealed with the Kings Ring, could not be changed nor reuoked. Therefore, whom-

Dan.6.8.

whomſoeuer God ſeales vnto life, as his child, he is made moſt ſure of eternall life. For this cauſe is it, that in the Reuelation, God firſt will haue his children ſealed before the enemies can haue power to execute their malice; and of theſe thus ſealed, it is, that Chriſt ſaith, *That the gates of hell ſhall not preuaile against them.* And *that they ſhall neuer periſh, neither ſhall any plucke them out of his hand.* Reuel.7.3. Mat.16.18. Ioh.10.28.

Now, this ſame ſending foorth of the Spirit of Adoption in our

hearts, is our sealing. Therefore saith the Apostle to the Ephesians, *Ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise.* And this same is also our annointing, poured out vpon vs, as that oyle on *Aaron*: therefore are we said to haue this annointing from him which is holy, and that it teacheth vs, and that it is true, and not lying: according to that which is said by Christ of the Spirit: *I will pray the Father, and he will giue you another comforter, that he may abide with you for euer, euen the Spirit*

Ioel 2.28. Act. 2.17. 1 Ioh. 2.2.

Ioh. 14.

Spirit of truth, he ſhall teach you all things. And the ſame alſo is our earneſt: therefore it is called the earneſt of the Spirit: 2 Cor. 5.5. and alſo the firſt fruites of the Spirit. So by the ſame Spirit, as by oyle, as by earneſt, as by a ſeale, doth God ſtabliſh our hearts, in that which they do witneſſe to vs, touching our Adoption. And that doth the Apoſtle ſignifie when he ſaith, *The ſame Spirit beareth witneſſe with our ſpirits, that we are the ſonnes of God.* Rom. 8.16

Marke then the order of Gods working. Firſt

he ſpeakes the word of truth to the heart, and in ſpeaking, writes it in the heart: hereupon the heart is made to beleeue that which it hath heard and receiued from the Spirit: and when it beleeues, it ſpeakes, and the thing it ſpeaks, is that ſame, which is engrauen in it, by the Spirit: to wit, that God is his God, and he is his child. For neuer can the heart of a man ſpeake one word of mercie to him, nor of Adoption, till the Spirit of God haue ſpoken firſt of mercy to it. Now when the ſpirit of man

man hath ſpoken, and giuen teſtimonie to him, of his election, then the Lord for eſtabliſhing the heart in this, and confirming man in the teſtimony of his heart, he addeth his Spirit: & by the teſtimony thereof, ſeales this promiſe in the heart, and makes Adoption and eternall life, moſt certaine and ſure to the ſoule, that he dare be bold with the Apoſtle to ſay, *Who ſhall lay any thing vnto my charge? who ſhall condemne me? who ſhall ſeparate me from the loue of Chriſt? I am perſwaded that* Rom. 8. 33.

that neither death nor life, nor anguish, &c. shall be able to separate me from the loue of God which is in Iesus Christ my Lord.

And that we may yet more euidently see the necessitie of this testimonie of Gods Spirit, we are to consider, that albeit our owne hearts haue in them a power to witnesse vnto vs what we are both by nature and by grace, yet the testimonie of our hearts touching our estate by grace, is not so fully and confidently to be reposed vpon and trusted, as the testimonie thereof

thereof touching our eſtate by nature. For we may aſſuredly truſt our hearts and conſciences, when vpon any guiltines they condemne vs, ſeeing he is curſed that abides not in euery iot of the Law to fulfill it: and he that tranſgreſſeth one commandement, is guiltie of all: but we are not alwaies to giue abſolute credit to our conſciences, when vpon conceite of innocencie they iuſtifie vs. For although our conſciences accuſe vs of nothing, yet thereby we are not iuſtified, as is plaine

Deut. 27. 11.
Gal. 3. 10.
Iam. 2. 10.

plaine by the saying of the Apostle touching himselfe, 1 *Cor.* 4. 4. The reason hereof is, because our consciences do not so clearely see our estate which is from God, neither can they of themselues so truly iudge of it, as they may do of their estate by nature, when they are illuminate by God: for then they are made to know & clearely to see that in vs there is no goodnesse, and therefore there is iust reason why they should condemne vs. And we are verily to beleeue our hearts

hearts vpon this ſight & knowledge condemning vs. But on the other part, although we ſee the mind of God towards vs in Chriſt, yet we cannot ſo throughly apprehend his promiſes vpon any ſight we receiue, that we dare truſt our felicity abſolute ly to the teſtimonie of our owne hearts. Firſt, becauſe our hearts may be deceiued, as is euident by Scripture, that many ſhall be. Secondly, becauſe we may miſtake the working of God in vs, & lay hold on a wrong ground. Thirdly, becauſe our hearts

hearts are more prone to ſpeake good then euill of our ſelues, euen when they haue neuer ſo ſmall occaſion to do ſo, and when they haue much more occaſion to do the contrarie. And laſtly, becauſe all men are lyars, & onely God is true; and therefore we muſt neuer giue ſo much credit to our conſciences, ſpeaking good of vs, as when they ſpeake euill: ſpecially whē the queſtion is of being the ſonnes of God, or not: ſo that euen when they witneſſe that we are the ſonnes of God, wee

are

are not to reſt hereupon except God, who onely knoweth whom he hath choſen, do by his Spirit confirme the teſtimonie of our ſpirit. For we may much more ſurely truſt our hearts in that which is in our ſelues and from our ſelues, thē in ẏ which is neither frō our ſelues nor in our ſelues, but is ẏ free gift of God in Chriſt. Therefore that we ſhould not be deceiued by our deceitfull hearts, God ſecondeth our owne teſtimonie touching his taking of vs for his children, by his Spirit, witneſſing

neſſing the ſame: euen as by his owne mouth confirming our adoption. For by the mouth of two or three witneſſes ſhall euery word be eſtabliſhed.

Thus I haue ſhewed you what is the Spirits teſtimonie, and in what manner he giues it, and how neceſſary it is. Now I come to that which you deſired to know: that is, how we diſcerne the teſtimonie of the Spirit which ſeales our Adoption, from the teſtimonie of our owne Spirit. For knowledge of this, Firſt, let vs conſider, that there be

be three things, whereby we diſcerne our Election and Adoption from the Spirit of God. The firſt is his preſence with vs. The ſecond is his worke in vs. The third is his voice vnto vs.

Touching the firſt: the very preſence of the Spirit of Adoption, is a witneſſe of our Adoption. For the Spirit is the earneſt of the inheritance of God, as we haue ſhewed before: therefore whoſoeuer hath the Spirit, the very hauing of him, is a ſure teſtimonie to that man, that he is the ſonne of

of God: *For he that hath the Spirit of Christ, he is Christs:* as by the contrary, *he that hath not the Spirit of Christ, is not Christs.* Now the hauing of the Spirit is discerned by the other two, that is, by the worke, and by the voyce: therefore those two are chiefly to be cõsidered: first his worke in vs, which must go before his voyce: I meane this voyce which seales Adoption: For otherwaies his voice alwaies goeth before his worke: for it is by the word, that he worketh all things in vs.

Rom. 8 9.

For

For vnderſtanding of this worke and voyce of the Spirit which ſealeth Adoption, marke the words of the Apoſtle in that ſame eight Chapter of the Romans, touching the Spirit, *Ye haue not receiued* (ſaith he) *the ſpirit of bondage to feare againe, but ye haue receiued the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we crie, Abba Father.* Here Adoption (vnder which is vnderſtood libertie) is oppoſed to bondage, as the effect of the Spirit. Next, the voice following hereupon, is manifeſt in the words following: Rom. 8. 15.

following: (*whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*) Which crie, more plainly is said by the Apostle to the *Galathians*, to be the crie of the Spirit, saying: *And because ye are sonnes, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Sonne in your hearts which cryeth Abba, Father.* And therefore is it that the Apostle to the *Romans* saith, *That the same Spirit beareth witnesse with our spirit, that we are the children of God.* What then is this worke of the Spirit in vs, that witnesseth Adoption? This speciall worke, is, liber tie,

Gal. 4. 6.

libertie, or freedome: accompanied euer with peace, boldneſſe, confidence,& reioycing. This is plaine by theſe places of Scripture. Firſt, the Apoſtle to the Corinthians, ſpeaking of this firſt great effect of the Spirit, ſaith: *Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is libertie:* and of the peace that accompanies this liberty, the Apoſtle ſpeakes plainly to the Epheſians, where, after he hath ſhewed, that by Chriſt we are deliuered from the law of commandements, and

2 Cor. 3. 17

Ephe. 2. 13.

and hatred that thereby did lie vpon vs, and hath spoken of the peace following thereupon, he proues this peace by
Eph. 2. 18. these words: *For through him we both haue an entrance vnto the Father by one Spirit.* Therefore the same Apostle to the Ro-
Rom. 5. 1. mans saith, *That being iustified by faith, we haue peace towards God.* Of this boldnesse & confidence, the Apostle speaks to the Ephesians, saying: *By*
Eph. 3. 12. *whom we haue boldnesse and accesse with confidence by faith in him.* Therefore is it that ỹ Apostle to the Ro-

Romans, ſaith: *That we haue not receiued the ſpirit of bondage vnto feare, but the Spirit that is without feare*, that is, *of boldneſſe and confidence.* Touching reioycing, the Apoſtle Peter ſpeaketh, ſaying: *In whom beleeuing, ye reioyce with ioy vnſpeakable and glorious.* 1 Pet. 1. 8. The ſame alſo affirmeth the Apoſtle to the Romans ſaying, *And we reioyce vnder the hope of the glorie of God, neither ſo onely, but we reioyce alſo in tribulations;* Rom. 5. 2. and he addes the reaſon, *becauſe the loue of God is ſhed abroad in our hearts by the*

holy Ghost which is giuen vnto vs. This I call the speciall working of the Spirit, for sealing our Adoption: because these effects cannot possibly be in vs, except the Spirit of Adoption worke them; and therefore whosoeuer hath them, he hath an vndoubted testimonie of his Adoption, from the very Spirit of Adoption. For this libertie, and effects of it, are not the worke of a mans owne heart: but the worke of Gods Spirit, in the heart: making it free, & causing it to reioyce, and making it

it cõfident towards God. That this may be cleare, we haue to conſider the eſtate of man, firſt, in ignorance and blindneſſe, before he knew either God, or himſelfe. Secondly, his eſtate vnder the Law. And laſtly, his eſtate vnder grace thorough the Goſpell.

In the two former caſes, there is nothing in mans heart, but blindneſſe, or the ſpirit of bondage, vnto feare: yea euen in the very elect, before they receiue this Spirit of Adoption and grace, by the Goſpell.

In man by nature, as he is borne, there is nothing but blindneſſe, I ſay nothing, not that I exclude bondage: for in both the firſt two eſtates of man, blindneſſe and bondage do accompanie each other: but in the firſt eſtate blindneſſe ſo reigneth, that bondage is not perceiued nor felt. In the ſecond, although blindneſſe be ſo farre taken away, as man ſee and feele his bondage: yet it is not ſo taken away, that it hide not from him his libertie and freedome. Therefore in the firſt he

is

is the ſlaue of blindneſſe and darkneſſe: becauſe the power thereof is predominant in him: holding him in ignorance of God, of himſelfe, of ſin, and of true righteouſnes. Therfore doth the Scripture ſay, *There is none that vnderſtandeth, there is none that ſeeketh God.* Rom.3.11 And the Apoſtle to the Epheſians, ſhewing the naturall eſtate of man, declareth that he is *without Chriſt, an aliant from the common wealth of Iſrael, a ſtranger from the couenant of promiſe, without hope, and without God in the* Ephe.2.12.

world. And therefore speaking of the vaine cõuersation of men natural, he sheweth the causes of it to be this, *Because they haue their vnderstanding darkened, being strangers frõ the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them.* And most clearely in the fift Chapter, *For ye were once darkneſſe*, meaning by nature: and therfore they who are effectually called to grace, are in that same place said, to be *light in the Lord*. And by the Apostle *Peter*, are said, *To be called of God out of darknes*

Eph.4. 8.

Chap.5.8.

1 Pet.2.9.

to

to his maruellous light. And to the Theſſalonians, they that are called, are ſaid, *To be of the day and of the light.* And they which are not called, are ſaid, to *be of the night, & of darkneſſe.* And the Apoſtle to the Coloſſians (willing to ſhew the force of darkneſſe in holding men in bondage) expreſſes their calling by God, in theſe words: *Who hath drawne vs out vnder the power of darkneſſe.* So it is manifeſt, that in our eſtate naturall, wherein (as ſaith the Apoſtle to the Galathians) *we know*

1 Theſ. 5. 5.

Coloſ. 1. 13

Gal. 4. 8.

not God, darkneſſe hath power and dominion ouer vs in ſuch ſort, that we haue no libertie of mind, nor body, to ſerue God: the mind being kept in ignorance of God, of righteouſneſſe, and of ſin. And ſo conſequently, man in this eſtate, is without feare. Not becauſe he is not in danger, but becauſe he ſeeth not his danger. Therefore alſo may he be ſecure, becauſe he is ſenſeleſſe: but confident he cannot be, becauſe he hath no knowledge. It is true, men in this caſe are commonly moſt

moſt peart in ſinne, and bold in wickedneſſe, againſt God: becauſe they know neither him, nor themſelues. And therefore, oft times, as fooliſh flyes, they ruſh vpon the candle: or as blind horſes do run againſt the wall: but bold and confident in him, they cannot be, who knowes him not in Chriſt. Therefore doth the Apoſtle declare that the cauſe why ſuch men giue themſelues to wantonneſſe, is, becauſe they haue no feeling. Eph. 4. 19.

Now in the ſecond eſtate, vnder the Law, we

are further from libertie, and the remainant blessings of the Spirit of adoption. For albeit that some light arise in the heart, by the Law: as the knowledge of sinne (conforme to that of the Apostle, *I knew not sinne but by the Law*,) yet this light, doth onely reueale to man his bondage: but doth not remoue nor remedie it: because that was impossible to the Law, *In as much as it was weake because of the flesh*, as saith the same Apostle. Therefore this light of the Law, although it be ne-

Rom. 7. 7.

Rom. 8. 3.

neceſſarie, yet it is comfortleſſe. For it ſhewes firſt to man, that he is *ſold vnder ſinne*, and that *no good dwelleth in him.* Hereupon, it reueales vnto him, that he is vnder the curſe of God, and ſo that he is dead. Whereupon it comes to paſſe, that God therein is ſo terrible to man, that he cannot abide him, nor heare him, but is compelled to runne from him: as it is cleare by the 12. Chap. to the Hebrewes, verſe 19, 20. 21. compared with Exod. Chap. 20. verſe 18. 19. 20. 21.

Rom. 7. 14.
Gal. 3. 10.
Rom. 7 10.

Thus

Thus our former blindneſſe, is turned into bondage, and the fruite of blindneſſe, that is, ſecuritie, is turned into ỳ fruite of bondage, which is feare. Therefore the miniſterie of the Law, is called, the miniſterie of
2 Cor. 3. death & condemnation. And in the firſt act of Gods calling, the Spirit that ſpeaketh in the Law, and is giuen by the miniſterie of the Law, is called the ſpirit of bondage,
Rom. 8. 15 vnto feare. Becauſe the ſight and knowledge of our ſelues, and of God, which the Spirit giues vs by

by the Law, works theſe effects. And therefore by that name is diſtinguiſhed from the Spirit of adoption, which is giuen by the Goſpell. And this will the Apoſtle ſignifie to the Galathians; when he (comparing the two Teſtaments to the two, by whom Abraham begot Iſmael and Iſaack) doth ſhew, that the one, which is from Mount Sinai, doth beget vnto bondage. Gal. 4. 24.

This being the eſtate of man, both by nature and by the Law: it is manifeſt, that theſe effects of

of the Spirit, which witnesse adoption, are not in man, neither by nature, neither by the Law. But when the free Spirit of the Lord cometh, then cometh libertie to the heart. And this Spirit of the Lord (otherwise called the Spirit of promise) comes to vs by the preaching of faith, and not of the workes of the Law: as witnesseth the Apostle to the Galathians, and the history of the Acts of the Apostles.

Gal.3.2. & 14.
Act.10.44.

Now then, when the man, (who first by nature was vnder blindnes: and

and next, by the Law, was vnder ſinne & death, kept in bondage and feare) findes himſelf, firſt deliuered frō that blindneſſe and ignorance of mind: & next, from that bondage of ſinne and death: & ſo conſequently from his feare which was wrought in him by his bondage; then may he know, that the Spirit of adoption, grace, and libertie, hath ſpoken to his heart, and hath taken poſſeſſion of it: becauſe he findes that promiſe accōpliſhed in him, whereof Zacharias ſpeaketh, in the

the Gospell, according to
Luke 1.74. Luke: to wit, *That God would grant to vs, that we being deliuered out of the hands of our enemies, should serue him without feare, all the dayes of our life, in holinesse and righteousnesse before him.* For this was the end of Christs death, saith the Apostle to the Hebrews,
Heb. 2.15. to wit, *That he might deliuer all them, who for feare of death, were all their life time subiect to bondage.* Thus therefore, the man, who can discerne in his heart, which once was filled with the spirit

ſpirit of bondage vnto feare, the ioyfull libertie of the ſonnes of God: whereby he that was the bondman and ſeruant of ſinne by the Law, is now by the Goſpell, made the free man of Chriſt, (the bands of iniquitie being broken) and ſo freed, both from the guiltines, and alſo from the power of ſinne: (being iuſtified by faith in Ieſus Chriſt, and hauing grace, in the ſuperabundance thereof, reigning through righteouſneſſe vnto eternall life through Ieſus Chriſt our Lord: euen in the ſoule, wherein

Rom. 5. 1. and 21.

wherein sinne in the abundance thereof, had reigned through vnrighteousnesse vnto death:) this man, I say, may easily discerne the Spirit witnessing his adoption, by this his libertie from the slauerie of sinne: First, in his iustification, next in his sanctification: and so consequently from the feare of death following thereon. In place whereof, succeedes a ioy vnspeakeable and glorious: the heart iustified, reioycing in the hope of the glorie of God. For this cause is it, that the Apo-

Pet.1.8.
Rom.5.2.

stle

ſtle Peter, willeth vs by *ioyning vertue to our faith, and to vertue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, &c.* to make our calling and election ſure. Becauſe our ſanctification (being the worke of the Spirit of adoption) is a ſure ſeale of our election. And therefore doth the Apoſtle Peter giue this reaſon of his threatning and rebuke againſt *Simon Magus*, to wit, that albeit he was baptized, yet the Apoſtle did ſee, that he was in the gall of bitterneſſe, and in the band of iniquity: where-

2 Pet. 1. 10.

in

in *Simon* being still captiue, could haue no assurance of adoption: albeit he had outwardly embraced the Gospell: and therefore is said, to haue beleeued. And because this worke, is the great worke of Christ in the elect, and chiefe end of his coming: Therefore doth the Prophet Esay describe the worke of his coming, and effect of the Spirit of the Lord in him, in these words: *The Spirit of the Lord is vpon me, the Lord hath annointed me, that I should preach the Gospell to the poore: that*

Esa. 61. 1.

I ſhould heale the broken hearted: that I ſhould preach deliuerie to the captiues, and receiuing of ſight to the blinde: that I ſhould ſet at libertie them that are bruiſed, and that I ſhould preach the acceptable yeare of the Lord: to appoint vnto them that mourne in Zion, and to giue vnto them beautie for aſhes, the oyle of ioy for mourning, the garments of gladneſſe for the Spirit of heauineſſe, that they might be called trees of righteouſneſſe, the planting of the Lord. Which Propheſie, Chriſt ſheweth

Luke 4.18. eth to be fulfilled by himselfe in the Gospell according to Luke, in the which it is manifest, that the worke of the Spirit, in preaching the Gospell, is, to worke knowledge and libertie, in making vs trees of righteousnesse, planted by God: and by libertie, to worke ioy and gladnesse, in place of mourning and heauinesse.

Therfore is it by good reason, that the Apostle forbids vs, to *let sinne* Rom.6.12. *reigne in our mortall bodies, that we should obey it in the lusts thereof:* in respect

ſpect we are made free from ſinne, in Chriſt: and are made the ſeruants of God: hauing our fruite in holineſſe. And alſo biddeth vs *reioyce alwaies in the Lord: for there is no condemnation to vs, that are in Chriſt, ſeeing we are freed from the law of ſinne & death, by the law of the Spirit of life which is in Chriſt Ieſus.* This is then that great effect of the Spirit of adoption in our hearts, whereby, as, by a moſt ſure teſtimony, we diſcerne the Spirit ſealing our adoption. Becauſe this Spirit of adoption

Phil. 4. 4.
Rom. 8. 1. 2.

tion, which is giuen vs by the preaching of the Gospell, takes away both these miseries: to wit, the blindnesse, wherein we are by nature; and next the bondage, reuealed by the law, and feare caused thereby.

Hauing thus spoken of the worke of the Spirit, it followeth that we consider the voyce of the Spirit.

This voice of the Spirit, is of two sorts. The first is, when the Spirit within vs, speaketh to God for vs. The second is when the Spirit in vs, speaketh

ſpeaketh from God vnto vs. The voyce of the Spirit of God, is, when we by the Spirit call vpon God as our Father. And this voyce of the Spirit is not onely an euidence that we haue the Spirit, but alſo a witneſſe of our adoption: making manifeſt vnto vs, that the Spirit hath wrought in vs, that worke of libertie, whereof we haue already ſpoken.

Touching the firſt, it is manifeſt, in that, without the Spirit, we cannot pray vnto God: as teſtifieth the Apoſtle to the

Rom.8.26 Romans, saying: *The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what to pray as we ought: but the Spirit it selfe, maketh request for vs with sighes that cannot be expressed.* Conforme to this also doth ỹ same Apostle say in that same place, Rom.8.23 *we also who haue the first fruites of the Spirit, euen we do sigh in our selues, waiting for the Adoption.*

And this is clearely confirmed by the words of the Prophet Zacharie: Zach.12.10. *In that day, saith the Lord, I will powre vpon the house of Dauid, and vpon the*

the inhabitants of Ieruſalem, the Spirit of grace & of compaſſion, and they ſhall looke vpon me whom they haue pierced, and they ſhall lament for him, &c.

The veritie of this point may be ſhewed by the nature of praier: in which firſt it is required, that it be made vnto God. Secondly, that it be made in the Name of Chriſt. Thirdly, that it be made according to the will of God.

Concerning the firſt, it cannot be without the Spirit: becauſe we haue no entrance nor acceſſe

to God in Christ, but by the Spirit. This is manifest by the Apostle, saying: Eph. 2. 18. *For through him, we both haue accesse to the Father, by one Spirit.* Secondly, we cannot pray in the Name of Christ, except we acknowledge God his Father, and in him our Father: which we can neuer do, except we be taught by the Spirit. For (as saith the Apostle) Rom. 8. 16 *The Spirit beareth witnesse with our spirit, that we are the sonnes of God.* Thirdly, no prayer can be made according to the will of God, but by

by the Spirit: becauſe, *None knoweth the mind of God, but the Spirit of God.* 1 Cor. 2. 18
According to which the ſame Apoſtle ſaith: *That he that ſearcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the meaning of the Spirit. For he maketh interceſſion for the Saints, according to the will of God.* Rom. 8. 27
By all theſe it is plaine, ẏ none can pray which haue not the Spirit. For the babling of hypocrits, is no prayer: ſeeing it proceeds not from the Spirit. And this is to be vnderſtood of all manner of prayer. For all manner of prayer,

be it confession, petition, supplication, or giuing of thankes, must still be by the Spirit. According to the saying of the Apostle;

Eph.6. 18. *And pray alway in all manner of prayer and supplication in the Spirit.*

Moreouer, this voyce of the Spirit is the witnes of our adoption, and of the worke of our freedome in Christ. Which is euident by the Apostle, First, in that he saith, *That by this Spirit we crie Abba Father.* And the same Apostle, to witnesse the same truth, saith in another place: *Because ye*

Gal.4.6.

are

are ſonnes, God hath ſent foorth the Spirit of his Sonne into your hearts, crying Abba Father. Which crie of the Spirit cannot be in vs, vntill firſt we be the ſonnes of God: ſeeing this crie containeth in it, a plaine profeſſion of our Adoption, while the ſpirit in vs doth call vpon God, as our Father: and maketh vs call vpon him as our Father.

Secondly, this is manifeſt by the deſcription, which the Apoſtle ſetteth downe of the Spirit, whereby we crie Abba Father: *That it is not the* Rom.8.15

spirit of bondage vnto feare, but the Spirit of Adoption. Which by the contrary may be vnderstood to comprehend freedome and libertie. According to the saying
2 Cor. 3. 17 of the Apostle, *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.* For they who liue in darknesse, and in the bands of iniquitie, not yet made partakers of the ioyfull libertie of the sons of God, can neuer with boldnesse approch to the Throne of grace, to call vpon God as their Father. Hereupon it is that the Scriptures absolutely con-

conclude, *That whosoeuer shall call vpon the Name of the Lord, shall be saued.* Ioel 2 32. Rom. 10. 13.

Because no man can call vpon God, vntill he beleeue, that God is his God, and he his sonne in Christ; according to the saying of the Apostle, *How shall they call vpon him, in whom they haue not beleeued?* Rom. 10. This sheweth plainly, that the spirits crie, or our calling vpon God by the Spirit, as our Father, is a sure testimonie of our adoption, and seale of our effectuall calling. There-

fore, vnder the calling vpon the Name of the Lord, is oft set downe the true & infallible description of Gods children: as namely, to the Corinthians; 1 Cor. 1. 2. *Vnto the Church of God which is at Corinth, with all that call vpon the Name of the Lord Iesus Christ in euery place.* And the same Apostle sheweth, that the foundation of God which remaineth sure (that is, the election of God) hath this seale, 2 Tim. 2. 19. *Let euery one that calleth vpon the Name of the Lord, depart from iniquitie.* Declaring plainly, that

that to call vpon the Name of the Lord, is as much as to be one of Gods elect children: which in that ſame place is made manifeſt, by this other ſentence, *Follow after righteouſneſſe, faith, loue, and peace, with them that call vpon the Name of the Lord with pure hearts.* 2 Tim. 2. 22.

Thus we are to take our calling or crying on the Name of the Lord, with boldneſſe, in that confidence, & aſſurance which faith bringeth, for a ſure teſtimonie of the Spirit of adoption, poſſeſſing our hearts, and ſo of

of our adoption.

The other voyce of the Spirit, to wit, when the Spirit speaketh from God to vs, is likewise a most solide, firme, and infallible testimony of our adoption. And this sort of voyce, is that whereof the Prophet speaketh,

Esay.30.21 *And thine eare shall heare the voyce of one behinde thee, saying: This is the way, &c.* Of the same doth the Lord speake in another place, saying: *I*

Hos.2.14. *will allure her and bring her in the wildernesse, and speake kindly unto her.* Which places are not onely

onely to be referred to the Lords ſpeaking to his Church, in the externall miniſterie of his word: but are ſpecially to be vnderſtood of the inward working of God in the heart, by his Spirit. Of which ſort of voyce *Dauid* ſpeaketh, when he ſaith to the Lord, *Let me heare ioy and gladneſſe, that the bones which thou haſt broken, may reioyce.* Pſal.51.8.

And this ſort of voyce is threefold, for it conſiſteth either in Gods teaching, or in his confirming of that which he teacheth: or elſe in his comforting of

of his children in their afflictions. Of the first, that is, his teaching voyce, we haue spoken before.

For God by his Spirit speakes to vs, when inwardly he openeth our hearts, and maketh vs heare his word of grace, and to vnderstand it, and to receiue it. Of this worke Christ speaketh, when he saith: *But the Comforter which is the holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my Name, he shall teach you all things.* Secondly, God is said to speake vnto vs, by his Spirit, when he confir-

Io.14.26.

meth

meth to vs, the thing which he hath ſpoken: & of this we haue alſo ſpoken in generall. And of this kinde of voyce ſpeaketh the Apoſtle in that place to the Romans, ſaying: *The ſame Spirit beareth witneſſe with our ſpirit, that we are the ſons of God.* Rom.8.16. Of this confirmation, the ſame Apoſtle ſpeaketh to the Corinthians, when he ſaith, *As the teſtimonie of Ieſus Chriſt was confirmed in you.* 1 Cor.1.6. Which words ſhew the cleare euidence of that twofold teſtimonie of the Spirit, wherof we did ſpeake

speake before: The one, when God writeth his word in our hearts: which here is vnderstood by the testimonie of Christ. The other, when he seales that which he hath spoken, & in speaking hath written in our hearts: and that is here vnderstood, by the confirming of the testimonie of Iesus in vs. And for this worke of confirmation, the Spirit is called the earnest and seale of God.

And as God by his Spirit sealeth and confirmeth all the promises in Christ, and also all what he

he himſelf hath wrought in vs according to the promiſe: So among other things, he ſpecially cõfirmeth our adoption, when the Spirit beareth witneſſe to vs, that we are the ſonnes of God. After that firſt he hath effectually called vs by teaching vs and working faith in our hearts, and alſo hath made our hearts (now beleeuing) ſpeake to vs that we are ſonnes.

Thirdly, God is ſaid to ſpeake vnto vs by his Spirit, when he comforteth vs in our troubles remouing by his Spirit, the anguiſh

anguish and griefe of our hearts, and restoring vs to our wonted ioyes in him againe. Of which voyce of the Spirit, Dauid speaketh when he prayeth, *Make me heare ioy and gladnesse.* And againe, *Restore me to the ioy of thy saluation, and establish me with thy free Spirit.* For this worke the Spirit is called *the Comforter.*

Psal. 51. 8. 12.

Now we come to the last point: which is the principall thing which ye demand: & that is, How we shall discerne this testimonie of our owne spirit. And this is to be done,

done, either in the time of peace, or trouble: although it is more difficile in prosperitie, to distinguish them.

There is two voyces of the Spirit, as we haue said, which both witnesse our adoption. The first, when the Spirit in vs speakes to God.

This testimony of the Spirit is discerned three wayes: The first thing whereby we discerne it, is the great heauinesse of heart and sorrow which the conscience of sinne breedeth in vs, when (as saith the Prophet) God hauing

hauing powred vpon vs the Spirit of grace and
Zac.12.10. compassion, *We looke vpon him whom we haue pierced, and lament for him, as men mourne for their onely begotten sonne, and are sorrie for him, as men are for their first begotten child.* Of this nature was the mourning of *Peter*, after his deniall, when (as saith the holy
Mat.26.25. Scripture) *he went out & weeped bitterly*: and because this is a sure token of sauing grace, therefore
Math.5.4. they that mourne are counted blessed. This mourning hath alwayes ioyned

ioyned with it an hunger and thirſt for righteouſneſſe. For there can be no true mourning for ſin, where there is no deſire of righteouſneſſe. And becauſe this is the proper effect of the Spirit of grace in all and euery one of thoſe who receiue him: therefore doth the Lord by his Prophet declare what ſhall be the worke of the Spirit of grace and compaſſion in that day, when God ſhall powre him out vpon his children, ſaying: *Then ſhall there be great mourning at Ieruſalem: like as the*

Zac. 12.11. *the lamentation of Adadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon, &c.* In which place mourning is attributed to euery familie, to euery state, and to euery person, and that apart by themselues, to shew that it is a common effect wrought by the Spirit in all Gods children, and that vnfainedly.

The second thing whereby we discerne this testimonie of the Spirit, is the earnest longing with vehement grones & sighes in our selues for to be with Christ.

Of

Of this voyce of the Spirit the Apoſtle ſpeaketh, when he ſaith, *We alſo who haue the firſt fruit of the Spirit, euen we ſigh in our ſelues, waiting for the adoption.* And in another place to the ſame effect he ſaith, *That we ſigh, deſiring to be clothed vpon with our houſe which is from heauen.* For certainly, the naturall diſpoſition of a man, can neuer bring foorth this ſtrong deſire of heauen, neither yet could the renewed heart, being yet burdened with infirmitie and loue of this life, haue ſo

Rom.8.23.

2 Cor.5.2.

so strong a desire of remouing from it, of it selfe, if the Spirit did not worke it: and therfore the Apostle attributes these sighes for righteousnesse and heauen, to the Spirit: and doth shew vs, that *the Spirit* (in these cryes and sighes) *helpeth our infirmities.* Rom. 8.26

Thirdly, this testimonie of the Spirit is discerned by the confident requests & petitions it maketh to God in vs, in the full assurance of faith, without doubting: when with boldnesse, we draw neare vnto the Throne of grace,

grace, crying vpon God, *Abba Father: and in all things making our petitions manifeſt to God*, as ſaith the Apoſtle. For this confident boldneſſe of the heart, towards God, ſtill accompanied with reuerence and feare, cannot be in the heart, except the Spirit did worke it. For the boldneſſe of a blind heart, wanteth both aſſurance of Gods loue, and reuerence of his maieſtie. Phil. 4. 6.

But leauing this, we come to the diſcerning of the other voyce, which more properly is

called the testimonie of the Spirit: specially in that place to the Romans. And that is, when God in vs speaketh by his Spirit vnto vs.

This testimonie is to be discerned from the testimonie of our heart, three manner of wayes. First, in our first beleeuing. Secondly, after we haue beleeued. Thirdly, in the eclipses of our faith, and in our troubles.

In our first beleeuing, we may discerne the testimonie of Gods Spirit, from our own, touching our

our Adoption: becauſe our firſt beleeuing, is euer by the teſtimonie of the Spirit, and not by the teſtimonie of our owne heart. For our heart can neuer beare witneſſe to vs, that we are the ſonnes of God, vntill firſt our hearts haue beleeued, that we are his ſonnes. And this our hearts cannot do, except the Spirit haue firſt wrought this faith, by the word, in our hearts. Therefore, my firſt beliefe and aſſurance of my adoption, is alwaies the teſtimonie of the Spirit of God, & my

owne hearts teſtimonie, muſt ſtill follow vpon this: ſo that in mans heart, the voyce that maketh it firſt conceiue Gods loue, and beleeue it, is the Spirits teſtimonie: which, when the heart of man hath receiued, then it ſpeaketh. For till it beleeue, it cannot ſpeake: according as it is written: *I haue beleeued, and therefore I haue ſpoken.* Thus thē is this teſtimonie firſt diſcerned, when I diſcerne the voyce of the Spirit, which I beleeue, from the voyce of my ſpirit, now beleeuing, &

Pſal.116.10
2 Cor.4.13

bearing

bearing witneſſe to me of that, which firſt the Spirit of God did witnes to it.

Secondly, after wee haue beleeued, we may alſo diſcerne the teſtimonie of Gods Spirit from the teſtimonie of our owne ſpirit, by a plaine contrarie order. For in the former, the Spirits teſtimonie did go before the teſtimonie of our ſpirit: but here, it followeth after it: and is the confirmation of it. So that, whē after we haue beleeued the Spirit ſpeaking the word vnto vs, and after

that beleeuing, we haue ſpoken with our owne ſpirit: if then we heare a new voyce, confirming that which we beleeued, and which our ſpirit did ſpeake: that confirming, ſealing, and ſtabliſhing voyce, is the teſtimonie of Gods Spirit. Thus we muſt learne to diſcerne betwixt our beleeuing, and the confirmation of our beliefe: and ſo ſhall we know the teſtimonie of Gods Spirit, from the teſtimonie of our owne ſpirit. Therefore ſtill the holy Scriptures of God diſtinguiſh betwixt the

worke

worke of God, in making vs receiue the teſtimonie of his Spirit, & his worke, in confirming in vs, that teſtimonie now receiued. And alſo teacheth vs to know the teſtimonie of our owne ſpirit (which cometh in betwixt theſe two) to be different from them both. According to this working of God, the Saints pray, *Stabliſh O God, that which thou haſt wrought in vs.* Pſal. 90. 17.

To ſpeake more plainly of this point, there is a threefold voyce in the heart that hath the teſtimonie of Ieſus confir-

med in it. The first is the voyce of God, by his Spirit in the word speaking vnto our hearts, and perswading them to beleeue that the promise belongeth vnto vs.

The second voyce is the voyce of our hearts receiuing ỹ word, whereby it speaketh that which the Spirit hath perswaded, and this in effect is nothing but the very faith of the heart now actually working in vs. Whereas the first was the worke of the Spirit working this faith in vs: so that in this first act we are

patients,

patients, in the other we are agents: in the firſt we are ſpoken too by the Spirit of God; in the ſecond, our owne hearts ſpeake in vs. The third voyce is the voyce of Gods Spirit, following the voyce of our hearts, ratifying it: and this is nothing elſe but the confirmation of our faith. So we may ſee that the Lord performeth two works in vs for our comfort: the firſt is, the working of faith and beliefe: the other is the confirmation of the faith, which he himſelfe did worke. But

before this last worke, our hearts hauing faith wrought in them, do worke by it, or we with our hearts worke: and this is nothing but beleeuing with the heart, or the hearts beleeuing. Whereupon followeth the sealing of vs in that which it beleeueth, that is, in the testimony which the beleeuing heart giueth of him in whom it is.

Thirdly, we discerne this testimonie of the Spirit, in our trouble: when we find any comfort, or peace wrought in

in our hearts, when they are troubled: or any ioy, vpon the aſſurance of Gods loue. If we find a quiet calmneſſe of mind, with patience, meekneſſe and reioycing in tribulation, vpon any ſight or knowledge of our adoption: all theſe are the vndoubted teſtimonies of the Spirit: who ſhedding abroad the loue of God in our hearts, maketh vs to reioyce in affliction: as the Apoſtle ſpeaketh of the Hebrewes, *And ye ſuffered with gladneſſe the ſpoyling of your goods, knowing in your ſelues that* Heb. 10.

that ye haue in heauen a better, and an enduring substance. And touching the Apostles, it is said,
Act.5.41. *They departed reioycing that they were compted worthie to suffer for his Name.* That this ioy is the worke of the Spirit, vpon the testimonie of Gods loue, is manifest by the Apostle to the Romans, where shewing the cause, why we reioyce in affliction, he saith, *Because of the loue of God which is shed abroad in our hearts, by the holy Spirit which is giuen vs.* According to this ground it is, that the Saints

Saints are brought in, waiting what God will ſpeake to them in trouble: as namely in the Pſalme 85. verſe 8. *I will hearken what the Lord will ſay, concerning me: for he ſhall ſpeake peace vnto his people, and to his Saints.* And the Prophet Habacuk in like manner is brought in ſaying thus: *I will ſtand vpon my watch, and ſet me vpon the Towre, and will looke and ſee what he will ſay vnto me.* Thus whē God ſpeaketh peace to the Saints in affliction, and quieteth their thoughts, and

and maketh them heare ioy and gladnesse, that is the testimonie of the Spirit of the Lord, who is our onely Comforter. For, as saith the Prophet Dauid, *My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart.* And therefore *Moses* prayeth: *O satisfie vs with thy mercie, so shall we reioyce and be glad all our dayes, comfort vs againe, &c.* We may hold it for a most certaine truth, that our patient enduring of grieuous trialls ioyfully, the constant peace of God in our hearts, in the time

Psal. 73. 25.

Psal. 90. 14. 15.

time when we endure the enimitie of the world: the conſolations, wherewith we are comforted, in all our afflictions, are vndoubted teſtimonies of our adoptiõ, proceeding all from Gods Spirit.

But all this is moſt clearely diſcerned, when the teſtimonie of Gods Spirit, and the teſtimony of our ſpirit, are ſeparate the one from the other: and when they are found to ſpeake one againſt the other: and to giue two contrary teſtimonies. For while theſe two go together, and are not ſeuered

or

or disagreeing: it is oft times hard to discerne ỹ one from the other. But if we can find them separate, so that the one faile vs, and the other vphold vs, then may they clearely be discerned. And this cometh to passe, either when God vpon the carnall presumption of our hearts, suffereth vs to fall in some dangerous triall, or then, when God himselfe seemeth to become our enemie: so that the heart hath to wrestle with God himselfe, vnder the sence of his wrath, all former feeling of his mercie then

then ceaſſing.

Of the firſt, we haue example in *Peter*, whoſe heart ſaid vnto him, that no danger could make him forſake Chriſt the Lord; to make him know, that this was not the teſtimonie of Gods Spirit: but a carnall confidence of his owne heart, ſuffered him to be tried, and in the triall to fall: and ſo to finde, it was but his owne carnall heart, that did beare witnes to him. God oft times for this cauſe trieth his own children: to make them diſcerne betwixt the confidence

dence and assurance which their owne hearts giueth them, and that confidence and comfort which the Spirit of God worketh in them: that they may not trust in themselues, or in their owne hearts, but in the liuing God. This the Apostle witnesseth to the Corinthians, saying: *He maketh vs to receiue the sentence of death in our selues, because we should not trust in our selues, but in God which raiseth the dead.*

a Cor. 1. 9.

Of the second, we haue example in *Dauid* and

and in *Iob*. And this diſcerning of the Spirits teſtimonie is two-fold, one is by the voyce of the Spirit in vs, vnto God, when our hearts ſpeake the contrary. The other is, by the voyce of the Spirit vnto vs, when our owne hearts ſaith otherwaies.

Of the firſt, *Dauid* is an example: who in his proſperitie ſaid, *He ſhould neuer be moued*: Yet when God did hide his face, his heart failed him: and he ſaid in his haſte, *I am caſt out of thy ſight*. And yet he preſently addeth theſe

Pſal. 31. 2.

these words: *Neuertheleſſe thou hardeſt the voyce of my prayer*. Here we may perceiue *Dauids* owne heart, ſaying, he was caſt out of Gods ſight: but yet the Spirit of God, maketh requeſt vnto God for him, and maketh him pray in faith, as not reiected of God: and the Lord did heare him. This himſelfe ſheweth plainly, in another place, when he ſaith: *I beleeued, and therefore I ſpake: but I was ſore troubled, I ſaid in my haſte, All men are liers*. At this time, *Dauid* compaſſed

Pſal. 116. 10

ſed with the ſnares of death, and holden by the griefes of the graue, finding trouble and heauineſſe, declares the eſtate of his owne heart, that it ſaid, that all men are liers: and therefore he gathers this concluſion, that albeit his owne heart did ſay, that Gods promiſe ſhould not be accompliſhed: yet doubtleſſe he behoued to haue faith: becauſe he prayed. For except he had beleeued, he had not ſpoken. And what can be more cleare, to let vs ſee Gods Spirit bearing witneſſe, that

that God hath not forsaken vs, when our hearts say the contrarie, then when by witnessing this, the Spirit causeth vs, against the distrust of our owne hearts, to pray to God: euen aboue hope, yet vnder hope, trusting in the Lord, as did Abraham? If we examine our selues, what hath bene the estate of our hearts, in the like (or at least in our greatest temptations) we shall find, that many times, when our hearts hath spoken no comfort vnto vs: yet the Spirit of God hath

hath drawne ſighes and cries to God, out of our hearts: which alſo our God hath heard moſt graciouſly. Theſe cries are teſtimonies of the Spirit, witneſſing to vs, that we are the ſonnes of God: when as they proceed from vs, our hearts ſaying the contrary.

Of the ſecond kinde of the Spirits voyce, in ſpeaking from God vnto vs, we haue likewiſe example in *Dauid*, when his owne heart ſaid vnto God, *why haſt thou forgotten me?* Behold another voyce ſpeaking vnto his Pſal. 42.

his heart in that same time, *Why art thou vexed O my soule, and why art thou so disquieted within mee?* *O put thy trust in God, for I will yet giue him thankes, he is my helpe and my God.* Here the heart speaking no comfort, but being wholly discouraged, and cast downe: the Spirit of God in that same heart, speaketh to the heart, and comforteth it with this, that God was his God. Now that these consolations are the worke and testimonie of Gods Spirit, it appeareth by that reason,

reaſon which *Dauid* giueth, when he boaſteth in ſtrong confidence, that although he ſhould walke through the valley of the ſhadow of death, yet would he feare none euill, ſaying: *For thou art with me, thy rod and thy ſtaffe doth comfort me.* Pſal. 23. By theſe words declaring, that the experience he had of the comfort which Gods Spirit did minister vnto him in his moſt deſperate troubles paſt, euen then when his owne ſpirit did faile him, was the ground of all his confidence a-

against all future trials.

We haue an example also of this in *Iob*: who when his owne heart reasoned, that God had hid his face from him, and taken him for his enemy: yet he saith, *Although he slay me, yet will I trust in him, he shall be my saluation.* Heare two different speeches in one heart: the one from the spirit of *Iob*: the other from the Spirit of the Lord in *Iob*. The one, perswading that God was his saluation, when the other said, God had hid his face from him.

Thus

Thus if wee would clearly diſcerne the teſtimonie of Gods Spirit, from the teſtimonie of our owne ſpirit, let vs behold our ſelues, when God trieth vs, rather then when he maketh our mountaine to ſtand ſtrong, or when he doth wreſtle with vs himſelfe, as he did with *Iacob*: and in ſeeming to fight againſt vs, yet doth ſuſtaine vs, by his owne ſtrength in vs, when our ſtrength faileth vs.

Thus I haue as diſtinctly as I could, and

therfore somewhat more largely then an Epistle perhaps requireth, giuen you such satisfaction to your question, as it hath pleased the Lord to grant me light. If you finde any comfort thereby, you shall thanke God for it: And what is wanting in it, for your full satisfaction in this matter, the Lord shall supplie it by his owne Spirit: or by that sufficiencie of grace, which he hath giuen vnto others his seruants, whom he shall raise vp to write more fully of this matter,

for

for the edification of his Saints, in this and all other things. I pray the Lord to giue you and vs all, his euerlaſting peace through Chriſt Ieſus our Sauiour, reuealing more and more the myſterie of godlineſſe in your hearts, and making you abound in all knowledge, with faith, feeling, and ioy of the holy Ghoſt. The grace of the Lord Ieſus be with you, and all the Brethren, Amen.

Iohn Forbes.